

U.S. Department
of Transportation
United States
Coast Guard



Commander
8th Coast Guard District
Hale Boggs Federal Bldg

501 Magazine Street
New Orleans, LA 70130-3396
Staff Symbol: (moc-2)
Phone: (504) 589-6271

16711
25 September 1996

From: Commander, Eighth Coast Guard District
To: Distribution

Subj: PASSENGER VESSEL SAFETY INITIATIVE, IMPLEMENTATION
GUIDANCE

Ref: (a) Marine Safety Manual, Vol II, Chapter 20
(b) PHONCON between CDR Deno COMDT (G-MO-1) and CDR
Tetreau CGD EIGHT(moc) of 25 Sep 96

1. Enclosure (1) is forwarded for immediate action and implementation. Reference (a) contains additional guidance, with specific examples of unacceptable stowage of flammables in spaces.
2. Further guidance from G-MO indicates that if a ship has not taken a proactive approach to the requests of their letter to cruise ship owners/operators dated 4 September 1996, each MSO should do so under the Port State Control (PSC) mission.
3. As discussed in reference (b), the OCMI may forego or change the scope of the fire safety risk assessment on vessels that proactively conducted a comprehensive assessment prior to arrival at a U.S. port. This action shall only take place after the vessel is boarded and the vessel demonstrates the adequacy of their actions to the satisfaction of the attending marine inspector. In all cases, the expanded vessel exam which occurs at the next annual or quarterly control verification exam, shall be conducted.
4. OCMI's are encouraged to coordinate these examinations with vessel agents to minimize the negative impact on vessel operations. Questions regarding this matter may be directed to LCDR Van de Voorde or CDR Tetreau at (504) 589-6271.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "J. W. Calhoun".
J. W. CALHOUN
By direction

Encl: (1) COMDT (G-MO-1) ltr 16711 of 18 September 1996

Dist: All Eighth District Gulf Region MSOs and MSU



16711

SEP 18 1996

From: Commandant
To: Distribution

Subj: PASSENGER VESSEL SAFETY INITIATIVE, IMPLEMENTATION
GUIDANCE

Ref: (a) Report of The Cruise Ship Safety Review Task Force
(b) Commandant (G-MO) letter dated 4 September 1996

1. In spite of an overall heightened awareness of the causes of passenger vessel casualties delineated in reference (a), and the strong collective effort of vessel owners and operators and Coast Guard personnel to identify and correct potential problems, two groundings and three fires have occurred in 1996. The most serious of these incidents involved the deaths of five crewmembers aboard the S.S. UNIVERSE EXPLORER, possibly attributed to, in part, apparent breaches in the vessel's fire boundaries.

2. As a result of these continued casualties, reference (b) was sent to remind all cruise vessel owners and operators to continue their efforts to improve the level of safety afforded to passengers embarked from U.S. ports. In keeping with our previous efforts, the Coast Guard will provide marine inspectors from either the local offices and/or the Quality Assurance Staff (Traveling Inspectors) to assist them with a fire safety risk assessment of each vessel operating from a U.S. port. I am fully aware of the workload demands you must currently balance, but we must remain mindful of the potential serious dangers facing passengers as well as crews as a result of a major fire or foundering of one of these vessels.

3. This effort shall be a twofold process. First, during the next 90 days, each vessel shall be subject to a fire safety risk assessment conducted collectively by ship's officers, operator's shore side representatives, class society surveyors and a qualified marine inspector. In addition to the normal fire safety inspections conducted in passenger spaces during Control Verification Examinations (CVEs), a careful examination shall be made in all crew, machinery and storage spaces to detect any potential ignition sources, items not authorized to be in certain spaces such as painting materials or other flammable/combustible liquids or excessive amounts of burnable materials which could create a heavy fire load. Particular emphasis should be placed on the condition of electrical equipment in each space. Recent inspections of these systems by the Quality Assurance Staff (Traveling Inspectors) have revealed many improper splices, defective boxes and receptacles, non-grounded equipment,

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unapproved cable and non-safe ended wires. The majority of these discrepancies were found in non-passenger spaces. All such discrepancies must be immediately addressed and permanently repaired or temporarily repaired in a safe and acceptable manner prior to departing a port with passengers.

4. The second part of this process shall occur at the next regularly scheduled annual or quarterly CVE. In addition to the normal CVE items, an expanded examination similar in scope to an initial Port State Control boarding shall be conducted. This examination should focus on the overall structural condition of the vessel and its vital piping systems. In the last two months, several vessels have been found with excessive wastage (including holes) in tank tops, watertight transverse division bulk heads and structural frames. These discrepancies constitute indisputable violations of a vessel's SOLAS Safety Construction and Load Line Certificates and are the basis for a SOLAS intervention. Further, many discrepancies have been noted to piping systems including soft patches and cement boxes, particular at tank top penetrations. Portions of bilge pumping systems have been found inoperative due to wasted piping and fore peak suction valve reach rods were noted to be bound, jammed or otherwise non-functional. These items also constitute Load Line violations. All operators should invite the cognizant class surveyor to attend this expanded examination; in the event discrepancies are found, this might mitigate possible disruption of the vessel's sailing schedule.

5. All district (m) officers shall disseminate this letter to cognizant OCMIs immediately. Additionally, enclosure (2) contains a list of vessels of particular interest to the Quality Assurance Staff (Traveling Inspectors). The past inspection history of vessels of similar age and service (particularly day trippers) has shown a number of discrepancies with respect to structure, machinery, piping systems and electrical installations. Many of these have been found in parts of the vessel not normally closely scrutinized during a CVE. The Traveling Inspectors will attend these vessels in order to verify their compliance with Flag State and Class Society standards. All OCMIs with any of these vessels operating within their zones are requested to advise the Quality Assurance Staff (Traveling Inspectors) by telephone or fax (202)267-4677. Any questions about implementation of these initiatives shall be addressed to the same staff.


J. N. MACCABA
Director of Field Activities

Encl: (1) COMDT (G-MO) Letter dated September 4, 1996
(2) Cruise Ships of Particular Interest

Dist: ACTEUR/MIO, MSO Miami, FEACT
All District (m)
Marine Safety Center; Marine Safety School

U.S. Department
of Transportation

United States
Coast Guard



Commandant
United States Coast Guard

210C Second Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20593-0001
Staff Symbol: G-MO
Phone: (202) 267-2201

5000

SEPTEMBER 4, 1996

Dear Cruise Ship Owner/Operator,

We share a mutual concern about the cruise ship casualties which have occurred in recent months. In addition to the groundings which occurred in 1995, the fatalities and injuries resulting from shipboard fires could have been far more severe. Clearly your industry is particularly vulnerable because of the precious cargo you carry. In addition to the expectations passengers have for the enjoyment and relaxation of a cruise (and the crew has for a suitable working environment), passengers ultimately place their trust in you - the ship's management, and the Flag State/Port State to some degree - to keep them safe.

I am asking each of you to review cruise ship casualty data, particularly those involving fires aboard ship, to consider the lessons-learned from the subsequent investigations, and to review the safety risks associated with every cruise ship, its procedures and established policies, past management decisions and your future goals. I urge you to take an active role, ensuring that your ships, your officers and crews are maintained, trained and prepared for any emergency at sea.

What type of effort is necessary to earn your customers' abiding trust and further propel the cruise industry to a leadership position in transportation safety? I am firmly convinced that you must continue to focus your management culture on the role of people in preventing casualties and pollution. Over the past year, you've heard me speak on the Coast Guard's Prevention Through People program. "Know More, Train More, Do More, Offer More and Cooperate More" are goals I've stressed to achieve a higher state of safety. Yet we must continue to provide members of the marine community the skills and knowledge to improve safety, empowering them in safety management systems and forming partnerships to take advantage of the wealth of technical expertise and experience available.

Time is of the essence. During the next 90 days I ask you to direct each vessel which carries U.S. passengers or calls at a U.S. port to conduct a concerted fire safety risk assessment. While I realize the practical limitations of your busy operations schedule, I ask you to devote some time, when available, for this assessment. In order to be meaningful and of benefit to those involved, I suggest you include licensed deck and engineer officers and crewmembers, a company representative such as a port engineer or port captain, and a classification society surveyor. Your company representative should be empowered to take immediate

ENCLOSURE(1)

corrective action to rectify any problems identified. My commitment to you will be to provide an experienced Coast Guard Marine Inspector, either from the local Marine Safety Office or our Quality Assurance Staff in Headquarters. This should be conducted in the spirit of our partnership, working together proactively.

The intent of this fire safety assessment is to provide a concerted focus on certain areas of the ship with known risks. The scope of the effort should include safety meetings and a space-by-space examination of potential safety risks where ignition or heat sources, combustible materials or toxic gases are known to exist. This should also be an ideal opportunity to review conditions for compliance with the International Safety Management (ISM) Code, Standards for Training, Certification and Watchkeeping (STCW) Amendments and the Retroactive Fire Safety Amendments (RFSA). Despite the fact that these rules will not come into effect until 1997 and beyond, it may be valuable for you to ascertain each vessel's preparedness in advance.

Within two weeks following this assessment, I would like a written report of your findings and any suggestions you may wish to offer regarding our Control Verification Examination process. We have found these after-action reports to be quite valuable in teaching and sharing experiences, successes and lessons-learned.

I believe that this positive action is appropriate to assess potential risks and to mitigate such risks in the shipboard environment. To assist you, I have enclosed a "Fire Safety Risk Assessment" which includes some elements which could signal potential high risk. While admittedly not a technically comprehensive risk assessment tool, I believe it will help you identify potential areas of concern. I look forward to working with you to achieve our common objective of improving maritime safety.

Sincerely,



J. C. CARD
REAR ADMIRAL, U.S. COAST GUARD
CHIEF, MARINE SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENTAL
PROTECTION

Encl: (1) Fire Safety Risk Assessment

FIRE SAFETY RISK ASSESSMENT

1. Does the crew speak a common language? Is that language (which may be used during an emergency) understood by passengers embarked on the vessel?
2. Does the company have a procedure by which all crewmembers assigned to respond in the event of an emergency are immediately available on a 24 hour basis? Do emergency response personnel train together? Is there a clear procedure for training all crewmembers in emergency procedures for responding to shipboard emergencies? Is this taken into consideration following a significant crew change?
3. Has the crew conducted a walk-through with a focus on the engine room, control rooms, other machinery spaces, galley and laundry areas, paint lockers, storage spaces with combustibles, etc? Does the Safety Officer regularly examine the vessel's fire boundaries for unauthorized breaches or compromises?
4. Have alternations or modifications been made which degrade structural fire protection or made without classification society consent? Are there pending conditions of Class, either hull, machinery or electrical?
5. Has the vessel been subject to CG plan review/approval? If yes, was plan review performed prior to 1990? (Beginning in 1990 plan review became more rigorous).
6. Is the vessel in compliance with the 1992 SOLAS Retroactive Fire Safety Amendments that come into effect in October 1997? Has the vessel achieved ISM certification? (Note: ISM certification becomes mandatory in July 1998.)
7. Is the authority within a company to remove a vessel from service (even temporarily) because of concern about its fitness reserved only for senior management?

Other Navigation Safety-Related Concerns:

8. Does the company employ Bridge Management Teams? Are there written procedures? Do Bridge Management Teams strictly comply with the procedures?
9. Are navigation and operational decisions made on the basis of economics at the expense of safety?

ENCLOSURE (1)

CRUISE SHIPS OF PARTICULAR INTEREST

L 7716593	LACRUISE
L 7211517	SOUTHERN CROSS
L 7041637	ATLANTIC X
L 6810997	SCANDINAVIAN DAWN
L 6810627	MAXIM GORKIY
L 6708252	PACIFIC STAR (EX. TROPIC STAR)
L 6604834	WORLD RENAISSANCE
L 5260679	STARSHIP OCEANIC
L 6402937	VIKING PRINCESS
L 5321679	SUN VENTURE (EX. REGENT STAR)
L 5137391	AMERICAN ADVENTURE (EX. COSTA RIVIERA)
L 5103936	STAR OF TEXAS (EX. MARDI GRAS)
L 5113230	SEABREEZE 1
L 517115	MERMOZ
L 5059006	STELLA SOLARIS
L 5262835	REGAL EMPRESS
L 5185398	AMERIKANIS

ENCLOSURE (2)